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**ATTORNEY AMONG FOUR DEFENDANTS INDICTED IN ALLEGED \$16.2 MILLION
MORTGAGE FRAUD SCHEME INVOLVING AT LEAST 35 RESIDENTIAL LOANS**

CHICAGO — Four defendants — an attorney, a loan originator, a mortgage broker, and a loan processor — were indicted for allegedly participating in a scheme to fraudulently obtain at least 35 mortgage loans totaling more than \$16.2 million from various lenders, federal law enforcement officials announced today. The indictment alleges that the mortgages were obtained to finance the purchase of properties throughout Chicago and in suburban Country Club Hills by buyers who were fraudulently qualified for loans while the defendants allegedly profited from fees they were paid and undisclosed payments they obtained.

All four defendants were charged with various counts of mail fraud and bank fraud in a nine-count indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury last Thursday. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of \$16,218,050. The charges were announced today by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Thomas P. Brady, Inspector-in-Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago.

Hakeem Rashid, 39, of Miami and formerly of the Chicago area, a licensed loan originator who was employed by two mortgage brokerage companies, including 1st Regent Mortgage Funding, Inc., was charged with four counts of mail fraud and five counts of bank fraud. **Kareem Broughton**, 39, of Chicago, a mortgage broker and the owner of 1st Regent, was charged with two counts of mail fraud and three counts of bank fraud. **Marguerite Elise Dixon-Roper**, also known as “Elise Dixon,” 46, of Darien, an attorney, was charged with one count of mail fraud and two counts of bank fraud, and **Jada Elaine Lucas**, aka “Sophia Youssef,” 52, of Chicago, a loan processor at 1st Regent and another brokerage, was charged with three counts of mail fraud and one count of bank fraud.

An arrest warrant was issued for Rashid. The other three defendants are scheduled to be arraigned at 9:30 a.m. Thursday before Magistrate Judge Geraldine Soat Brown in U.S. District Court.

Between 2005 and May 2008, all four defendants and others allegedly schemed to obtain the fraudulent mortgages by making false representations in loan applications, supporting documents, and HUD-1 settlement statements concerning the buyers’ income, employment, financial condition, source of down payments, and intention to occupy the property.

As part of the scheme, Rashid, Broughton and Dixon-Roper allegedly recruited buyers to purchase properties and facilitated the buyers’ purchase of properties, knowing that they would be fraudulently qualified for mortgage loans. Rashid and Broughton allegedly paid buyers for purchasing properties, while concealing the payments from lenders. In addition, the defendants also allegedly either purchased properties, which were mostly scattered throughout the city, and/or refinanced existing mortgages in their own names, knowing that they were fraudulently qualified for the loans.

According to the indictment, Broughton received payment through 1st Regent in the form of brokerage fees on loans for buyers whom he knew were qualified based on false information submitted to lenders; Rashid received payment through 1st Regent and another company for originating mortgage loans for buyers whom he knew were not qualified; Dixon-Roper received payment for representing buyers and sellers at real estate closings, knowing that the buyers were not legitimately qualified borrowers; and Youssef received payment for processing loans through 1st Regent, knowing that she submitted false information to qualify buyers for the loans.

In addition, Rashid, Broughton and Dixon-Roper allegedly obtained undisclosed payments through entities they controlled, including The Broughton Group, R&B Management, Hamaya Banco, and Dixon-Roper's law firm. Rashid and Dixon also allegedly submitted false statements to lenders indicating that escrow money was being held by Dixon-Roper or her law firm. Instead, knowing that no escrow money was being held, Dixon directed the payment of money purportedly held in escrow to herself and Rashid, while concealing the true nature of the payments from lenders, the charges allege.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Stephanie Zimdahl and Erika Csicsila.

Each count of bank fraud carries a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine, and each count of mail fraud carries a maximum of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and restitution is mandatory. If convicted, the Court may impose an alternate fine totaling twice the loss to any victim or twice the gain to the defendant, whichever is greater. The Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal sentencing statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt.

The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The charges are part of a continuing effort to investigate and prosecute mortgage fraud in northern Illinois and nationwide under the umbrella of the interagency Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force, which was established to lead an aggressive, coordinated and proactive effort to investigate and prosecute financial crimes.

Since 2008, close to 200 defendants have been charged in Federal Court in Chicago and Rockford with engaging in various mortgage fraud schemes involving more than 1,000 properties and more than \$280 million in potential losses, signifying the high priority that federal law enforcement officials give mortgage fraud in an effort to deter others from engaging in crimes relating to residential and commercial real estate.

The Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force includes representatives from a broad range of federal agencies, regulatory authorities, inspectors general, and state and local law enforcement who, working together, bring to bear a powerful array of criminal and civil enforcement resources. The task force is working to improve efforts across the federal executive branch, and with state and local partners, to investigate and prosecute significant financial crimes, ensure just and effective punishment for those who perpetrate financial crimes, combat discrimination in the lending and financial markets, and recover proceeds for victims of financial crimes. For more information on the task force, visit: www.StopFraud.gov.

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